

RTT

TAB A

S-E-C-R-E-T

Proposal for a Revised Fitness Reporting System1. Background:

a. During the last twenty years the Agency, the Federal Government, and private industry have experimented with a great number of Fitness Report Forms and Systems. Much effort has been expended in analyzing the results achieved by existing systems, and attempting to correct weaknesses through the development of "improved" systems and procedures. Few tangible improvements have been realized, but there is a general and almost universal conclusion that Fitness Reporting must be continued for personnel management purposes, even though a truly satisfactory system has not emerged.

b. Within the Agency, Fitness Reports have been used to rate employee performance, personal traits, and potential by the use of: (a) Adjective or numerical ratings, and (b) narrative evaluatory statements. General agreement exists that evaluatory statements have been more significant and have served better than adjective or numerical ratings in providing a picture of the individual and his manner of performance.

2. Evaluation of Current Fitness Reporting System:

a. Adjective Ratings: The current system uses five adjective ratings: Weak, Adequate, Proficient, Strong, and Outstanding, to appraise the performance of specific duties and overall performance. In practice, however, only three of the ratings are generally used: Proficient, Strong and Outstanding. The trend has been to use more of the higher ratings each year.

CS Career Service Fitness Reporting of Overall Performance

	<u>CS-7, 10, 11</u>		<u>CS-12-13</u>		<u>CS-14 & Above</u>
	<u>1962</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1967</u>
Weak	1%	0.1%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%
Adequate	7%	2.0%	4.7%	0.5%	0.6%
Proficient	45%	23.0%	35.5%	18.7%	9.8%
Strong	42%	69.0%	55.9%	76.1%	71.8%
Outstanding	5%	6.0%	3.5%	4.6%	17.7%

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The foregoing indicates the increasing upward trend in the use of high ratings and the loss of significance of the five rating scale. Almost 90% of our GS-14 and above personnel are rated as performing above average (Proficient). At the same time, Adequate and Weak ratings have tended not only to fall into disuse but also to become substantially indistinguishable. In practice, a rating of "Adequate" does not provide a definable or defensible basis for taking adverse actions.

b. Narrative Ratings: The current Fitness Reporting system provides a narrative evaluation of total performance. Many raters provide a descriptive and meaningful evaluation which is useful for personnel management purposes; other narrative evaluations consist of generalizations and platitudes and do not evaluate in specific terms characteristics of the individual or his performance. Improved guidelines to structure the narrative content of the evaluation should provide more useful and consistent reports.

3. Suggested Revision of the Fitness Reporting System and Fitness Report Form:

a. Characteristics:

(1). Rating Scale:

Unsatisfactory: Less than satisfactory performance. Does not meet performance requirements for the duty or the position.

Satisfactory: Performance is characterized by effectiveness in meeting duty and job requirements.

Outstanding: Performance is so exceptional in relation to requirements of the work and in comparison to performance of others doing similar work as to warrant special recognition.

(2). Rating of Specific Duties: It is believed that only significant duties should be recorded and rated. We propose to combine the revised rating scale with a descriptive rating of each duty in order to provide a more useful evaluation.

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- (3). Rating of Overall Performance: In making the overall performance rating, the rater will consider all factors affecting performance, including personal traits, skills, conduct, and any limitations which may apply. He will include a narrative evaluation to explain the basis for the rating and to give a general picture of where the individual stands in relation to others rated in the same group. In addition, the rater will comment on potential, suggest assignments and training needs, and outline personal traits of significance.
- (4). Evaluation by Reviewing Official: The Reviewing Officer will include a brief evaluation of performance, potential and future utilization of the individual rated. Whenever possible, he should indicate the relative ranking of the individual with others in the same grade and type of work. The reviewing officer will be responsible for assuring that the raters under his supervision adhere to realistic standards and undertake and follow through on necessary corrective actions. The reviewing official will be responsible also for resolving any critical differences of opinion between the individual and the rater, particularly if the ratings are adversely critical. If major differences cannot be adequately resolved by the component, they will be referred through command channels to the Career Service concerned for review.

b. Action Required on the Basis of Fitness Report Ratings:

Unsatisfactory Rating: A rating of unsatisfactory on any duty will require positive action to train or assist the individual to improve his performance of the work or will result in his assignment to other work. An overall rating of unsatisfactory will require corrective action without delay such as warning or probation, reassignment or special training. In extreme cases, separation may follow.

Outstanding Rating: A rating of outstanding on overall performance should be followed by special recognition as appropriate, including commendation, merit award, recommendation for promotion or quality step increase, or consideration for reassignment to more responsible work.

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- c. Performance Consultation: At least once a year, the supervisor will have a performance consultation with the employee being rated. This consultation may take place at the time the Fitness Report is being prepared or at some previous time as circumstances warrant. When an employee is given an unsatisfactory rating, a report of the performance consultation will be made and forwarded as an "Eyes Only" memorandum through normal command channels to the Secretary of the Career Service Board concerned. Such a performance consultation report in no way relieves the supervisor from commenting on an employee's failings or weaknesses in the regular Fitness Report. The certification that a performance consultation has been held on a specific date will appear on the Fitness Report form and will be signed by the supervisor.

4. Summary of Advantages of Proposed Fitness Report System:

- a. Each adjective rating will be more meaningful when combined with the narrative description or explanation. A descriptive rating of each element of performance (duties) as well as overall performance will be obtained. This emphasis on narrative evaluation will provide more useful information for personnel management purposes.
- b. Two of the three ratings, Unsatisfactory and Outstanding, will require that special action follows. We will not have to struggle with the meaning of the marginal "adequate" rating in connection with initiating an adverse action.
- c. The Report of Performance Consultation will be useful to supplement the Fitness Report when an unsatisfactory rating is involved to provide evaluatory material pertinent to the corrective action being recommended.
- d. The tendency to rate all individuals "above average" will be minimized.

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- e. The stronger role of the reviewing officer in achieving realistic and meaningful reports and in resolving differences between the individual and the rater will improve reporting and morale.

5. Revised Fitness Report Forms: Samples of the proposed revised Fitness Report Form are attached.

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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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(When Filled In)

FITNESS REPORT				EMPLOYEE SERIAL NUMBER	
SECTION A GENERAL					
1. NAME (Last) (First) (Middle)			2. DATE OF BIRTH	3. SEX	4. GRADE 5. SD
6. OFFICIAL POSITION TITLE			7. OFF/DIV/BR OF ASSIGNMENT		8. CURRENT STATION
9. CHECK (X) TYPE OF APPOINTMENT			10. CHECK (X) TYPE OF REPORT		
<input type="checkbox"/> CAREER <input type="checkbox"/> RESERVE <input type="checkbox"/> TEMPORARY			<input type="checkbox"/> INITIAL <input type="checkbox"/> REASSIGNMENT SUPERVISOR		
CAREER-PROVISIONAL (See Instructions - Section C)			ANNUAL <input type="checkbox"/> REASSIGNMENT EMPLOYEE		
SPECIAL (Specify):			SPECIAL (Specify):		
11. DATE REPORT DUE IN O.P.			12. REPORTING PERIOD (From- to-)		
SECTION B PERFORMANCE EVALUATION					
1. EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE OF SPECIFIC DUTIES					
LIST IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE NOT MORE THAN THE FOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT DUTIES PERFORMED DURING THE RATING PERIOD. RATE PROFICIENCY OF PERFORMANCE OF EACH DUTY BY ASSIGNING THE SYMBOL APPROPRIATE FOR THE ADJECTIVE RATING AND DESCRIBING IN NARRATIVE FORM THE MANNER IN WHICH THE DUTY WAS PERFORMED.					
U - UNSATISFACTORY S - SATISFACTORY O - OUTSTANDING					
SPECIFIC DUTIES		NARRATIVE COMMENT			RATING
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
2. OVERALL PERFORMANCE IN CURRENT POSITION					RATING:
TAKE INTO ACCOUNT EVERYTHING ABOUT THE EMPLOYEE WHICH INFLUENCES HIS EFFECTIVENESS SUCH AS PERFORMANCE OF SPECIFIC DUTIES, PRODUCTIVITY, CONDUCT ON JOB, COOPERATIVENESS, PERTINENT PERSONAL TRAITS OR HABITS AND PARTICULAR LIMITATIONS OR TALENTS.					

STANDARD
(WHEN FILLED IN)

3. NARRATIVE COMMENTS ON OVERALL PERFORMANCE

EXPLAIN BASIS FOR RATING, INCLUDING AN INDICATION, WHERE FEASIBLE, OF HOW THE EMPLOYEE STANDS IN RELATION TO OTHERS WITH THE SAME RATING. GIVE SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT AND UTILIZATION. OBSERVATIONS ON THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EMPLOYEE ARE PARTICULARLY DESIRED: MENTAL CAPACITY, ENERGY, SKILL, PERSONALITY AND DEDICATION TO JOB. COMMENT ON GENERAL EMPLOYMENT SKILLS AND COST CONSCIOUSNESS, AS APPLICABLE.

SECTION C			CERTIFICATION AND COMMENTS		
1. BY EMPLOYEE					
I CERTIFY THAT I HAVE SEEN SECTIONS A, B, AND C OF THIS REPORT					
DATE		SIGNATURE OF EMPLOYEE			
2. BY SUPERVISOR					
MONTHS UNDER MY SUPERVISION		IF THIS REPORT HAS NOT BEEN SHOWN TO EMPLOYEE, GIVE EXPLANATION:			DATE PERFORMANCE CONSULTATION HELD
DATE		OFFICIAL TITLE OF SUPERVISOR		TYPED OR PRINTED NAME AND SIGNATURE	
3. BY REVIEWING OFFICIAL					
DATE		OFFICIAL TITLE OF REVIEWING OFFICIAL		TYPED OR PRINTED NAME AND SIGNATURE	

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TAB B

Comments of the Deputy Directors and the Inspector General

Recommendation: That a three-point scale (Outstanding, Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory) instead of the present five-point scale (Outstanding, Superior, Proficient, Adequate, Weak.)

Comments:

DD/I: "Rather than eliminate what could be useful distinctions, I would prefer to see greater adherence to the philosophy and directions on the present rating system as expressed in the Fitness Report Guide."

DD/S&T: "I see no significant result accruing from the reduction of the present five-point adjectival scale of the Fitness Report to three. Indeed, one might ask why not reduce it to two. I would anticipate that a three-point scale would simply result in the addition of pluses and minuses and, therefore, to a proliferation of categories beyond the five which now are used."

Inspector Gen: "I would be particularly sorry to see the three level rating scale introduced. The sorting out of the middle group, which is now accomplished by dividing them between the Strong and the Proficient, seems to me to be an entirely worthwhile exercise."

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Recommendation: That the reviewing officer include a brief evaluation of performance potential and future utilization of the individual indicating relative rankings whenever possible and resolving any critical differences of opinion between the individual and the rater, particularly if the ratings are adversely critical.

Comments:

DD/I: "DD/P's proposal to increase the role of the reviewing official has two parts. I concur with the part which deals with resolving critical differences of opinion between the individual and the rater with further recourse to the Career Service. I do not, however, concur with the proposal that the reviewer 'indicate the relative ranking of the individual with others in the same grade and type of work.' I believe that such ranking should be the task of the Career Service Board concerned rather than a single reviewing official with so much more limited basis for comparison."

Inspector Gen: "The reviewing officer should make a basic evaluation of the rating officer (if able by previous association). For example, 'I have known the rater for several years and, while an excellent rating officer, he tends to rate all subordinates a little high (low, etc.).'"

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Recommendation: That there be a performance consultation at least once a year as a separate transaction with certification that such a consultation has been held on a specific date to appear on a Fitness Report Form.

Comments:

DD/I: "The need to formalize a requirement that a supervisor consult with his subordinate about performance annually appears to be a sad commentary on the Agency's supervisory skills. Consultation should be a continuous process; no supervisor should save up his criticism and guidance over a year's period for presentation to his subordinate at the time of an annual Fitness Report or mandatory performance consultation. Although the topic of employee supervision is more fundamental than the Fitness Report, it appears that we have been attempting to overcome the shortcomings of supervision by improvements in the Fitness Report form itself."

Inspector Gen: "If, as a part of this system, employee consultation is performed, then it should be recorded on the Fitness Report form."

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Recommendation: To combine the revised rating scale with a descriptive rating of each duty in order to make the adjective rating more meaningful.

Comments:

DD/I: "I doubt that this proposal will be any more successful than our present system in providing more useful information for personnel management purposes."

DD/S&T: "I would hesitate to lengthen the time of preparation by combining the adjective rating of each duty with a narrative."

Inspector Gen: "There should be no more than two 'specific duty' boxes. The employee should be rated on his assigned duty and secondary 'principal' assignments. Beyond that, again, miscellaneous functions could be covered in the narrative."

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Recommendation: That follow-up action on unsatisfactory ratings include a warning or probation on an overall rating of unsatisfactory and conversely an outstanding rating be recognized in a specific way such as Merit Award or Quality Increase.

Comment:

DD/S&T: "We need a technique which combines to facilitate the expression of dissatisfaction with corrective action. An example might be the tying of required action to use of the 'adequate' category. To my thinking an employee performing at the 'adequate' level should be easily replaceable with resulting improvement. I would favor the idea that a rating of 'adequate' mean the start of a probationary year in which improvement is necessary if the individual is to continue in that job. Then if the 'adequate' rating is repeated at the end of the next reporting period...the individual would be shifted to another position...or if the individual did not wish to shift, it would be understood that he could remain but with a reduction in grade. I would not argue the semantics of using 'adequate' for this action category, but I do feel that some such category be used which is higher on the scale than 'weak' and yet indicates that the organization does not intend to continue the individual indefinitely on such a marginal basis at his present pay scale. The value of such a scheme lies in the automaticity of eventual action on the specific problem combined with the postponement of action pending mutual efforts of both the rated individual and his

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General Comments:

DD/I: "In sum, I do not believe that the DDP proposal for changing the Fitness Report is likely to provide significantly better management information than the present system. The problem, however, is much more fundamental than one of Fitness Reports; it is the problem of having supervisors fulfilling their responsibilities on a continuing basis. Trying to force a solution to this problem through changes in the Fitness Report form is attacking the symptom rather than the basic cause."

DD/S&T: "We have spent much time in recent months discussing many aspects of Agency personnel management. Judging by these discussions a key problem is how to keep raising the caliber of the Agency's personnel assets. Raising the caliber means weeding out those individuals who are not performing at a proficient level or placing them in positions where they will perform proficiently. I do not think that the format of the fitness report is the correct focal point for an attack against this problem. Indeed, I find no fault with the format itself...I find that shortcomings in the fitness report system stem from the process of rating rather than the format of the report."

Inspector Gen: "For my part I am against change simply because I believe it is easier to read a file in which fitness reports over the years follow the same format. I recognize the points made by the DDP as having considerable validity; however,

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DD/S 69-0570

07 FEB 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Personnel

SUBJECT : Proposal for a Revised Fitness Reporting System

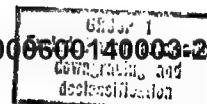
1. In reviewing the proposal of the Deputy Director for Plans to make changes in the Agency Fitness Report (Form 45), I believe the proposal in essence calls for:

- a. A reduction in the number of rating categories from five to three.
- b. A narrative evaluation of each specific duty listed in Section B of the present form.
- c. A narrative evaluation of overall performance by the rater.
- d. A narrative evaluation by the reviewing officer, and increased supervision by the reviewing officer of rating officers under his immediate supervision.
- e. Annual consultation with the employee.

2. I would like to comment on each of these points.

a. The fact that the lower two ("Adequate," "Weak") of the present five rating categories are not being used to the extent that the DD/P apparently feels they should be will not necessarily be corrected by reducing the categories to three -- "Unsatisfactory," "Satisfactory" and "Outstanding." The same factors that now result in supervisors rarely rating employees "Adequate" or "Weak" will pertain to "Unsatisfactory." Supervisors lacking the ability to distinguish between journeyman job performance and inadequate performance, or lacking the intestinal fortitude to sit down and tell an unsatisfactory employee the facts of his performance, will not acquire the ability to properly rate employees merely by changing the designation of rating categories. As a generalization supervisors hope to have the respect and liking of their fellow workers and to tell an employee that he doesn't measure up is found to be a very distasteful experience.

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The cure for the above must rest in training of supervisors, and command insistence and supervision to insure that fair ratings are given all employees by rating officials. Improper ratings are not only unfair to the unsatisfactory employee when his poor performance is not pointed out, but the strong performer is similarly downgraded by a supervisor who fails to distinguish adequately between strong and satisfactory performance.

b. The present Fitness Report form allows adequate space for comments on performance of duty, either specific duties or overall performance, and requests such comments in Section C. If a particular Component/Career Service should wish to have more specific comments, we see no reason why a command directive for more specific comments could not be fully satisfied on the present Fitness Report form.

c. The DD/P is seeking a more positive rating of overall performance; this objective is compatible with the present form. Again, a command directive for comments on specific traits or potential can be considered the prerogative of component chiefs or heads of Career Services. Most of the changes suggested involve matters that are already covered by many rating officers throughout the Agency when completing Section C of the present form.

d. All of the points suggested by the DD/P with respect to the evaluation by reviewing officials can be accommodated on the present Fitness Report form or by command supervision; the real problem may be as to how much personal knowledge the reviewing officer has of the ratee. Certainly one of our areas of difficulty with all Fitness Report forms that the Agency has used has been the failure of raters to adhere to realistic standards so that ratings given by different rating officers may be realistically compared. This brings up the old problem of "rating the raters;" some supervisors are by nature "tougher" than others. Command monitoring of Fitness Reports may yet be able to correct the more obvious cases of abnormal rating standards.

e. The proposal for an annual consultation between supervisor and employee is, in my opinion, a necessary and integral aspect of supervision. While I believe that many supervisors do hold such consultations at the time that the Fitness Report is shown to the employee, I see no difficulty in adopting a more positive and definitive policy in this respect. I agree that the fact of such consultation should be recorded.

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3. Fitness Reports remain a source of continued complaint throughout Government, and their proposed revisions provide steady employment for personnel technicians and psychologists. The Agency has also shared in this revision exercise. The present form has been in use for some nine years, and it has taken us all of those nine years to indoctrinate personnel -- those rated and the raters -- in its use. I do not believe that the proposed revisions are such that a new form, and several years of becoming used to it, are required. I would suggest as an alternative the continued use of the present Fitness Report form, with specific command guidance within each Career Service, if necessary, as to special requirements which are to be fulfilled by rating and reviewing officials. It goes without saying that improvement in rating objectivity and candor must be continuing goals throughout the chain of command. Where agreement exists as to specific instructions that should be altered or added, I would further recommend that these changes be made in the "Directions for Completing Form 45, Fitness Report."

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R. E. Dammann
Deputy Director
for Support

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TAB C

The DD/I Counter Proposal

"It seems to me that the primary purpose of providing management information often can be in conflict with the objective of informing the individual. Frequently, this conflict is resolved by the supervisor writing a bland, uncritical Fitness Report. Most of us who review personnel folders have learned to recognize this and form judgments about performance not so much from what is stated explicitly but more from what is implied by contrived language or from what is omitted from the Report. These considerations lead me to the conclusion that the basic problem with the current Fitness Report System will not be remedied by the DD/P proposal. What is needed is some means of providing management with the 'realistic,' 'meaningful,' 'thoughtful, unbiased assessment' called for in the Fitness Report Guide. I do not believe we can rely on supervisors to provide such an evaluation if it must be shown to the employee. This leads to the suggestion that we should have two separate but consistent reports on each individual. The report shown to the employee would emphasize aspects directly related to performance in his current position; the other for management would cover the broader range of topics listed in the Guide--'his strengths and weaknesses, his training and development needs, his imagination and creative abilities, his supervisory skills, his writing and language facilities, his intellectual and social talents, and...other qualities, traits, and personal circumstances we need for proper management of his career.' As a result of this review, I recommend that we consider the following course of action:

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a. The Office of Personnel draft a two-part 'Fitness' Report and associated guidance for our consideration.

b. Either the Inspector General or the Offices of Personnel and Training study the problem of first-and second-line supervision, report to us on the major deficiencies in the supervisor-subordinate relationship, and recommend actions and training necessary to remedy these deficiencies.

c. In the interim, the present Fitness Report System not be changed in any fundamental way except strengthen the role of the reviewing official. Executive action should be taken at all levels to foster greater adherence to the philosophy and directions expressed in the Fitness Report Guide [REDACTED]

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TAB D

PROFESSIONAL MANPOWER COMMITTEE

RATINGS OF OVER-ALL PERFORMANCE OF JUNIOR PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS
WHO ENTERED ON DUTY AT GRADES GS-07 THROUGH 12
DURING FISCAL YEARS 1963-1967

(Based on Evaluations Made by Immediate Supervisors)

	<u>DDI</u>	<u>DDP</u>	<u>DDS</u>	<u>DDS&T</u>
Number of Junior Officers Rated				
A. OUTSTANDING	3.1%	.015%	5.8%	4.4%
B. Between OUTSTANDING and STRONG	15.4%	10.3%	13.7%	17.2%
C. STRONG	34.8%	33.1%	42.3%	35.5%
D. Between STRONG and PROFICIENT	26.2%	29.3%	22.7%	27.6%
E. PROFICIENT	16.6%	20.6%	14.4%	14.3%
F. ADEQUATE	3.7%	5.0%	0.7%	1.0%
G. WEAK	<u>0.2%</u>	<u>0.022%</u>	<u>0.3%</u>	<u>0.0%</u>
	100.0%	98.3%*	99.9%*	100.0%

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* Shortfall due to Rounding of Figures.

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TAB E

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Rating Distribution by Career Service

	<u>Outstanding</u>	<u>Strong</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Weak</u>
DCI Group Rated	23.4%	48.2%	24.3%	3.6%	.5%
Group Rated	7.2%	66.6%	24.7%	1.4%	0.1%
Group Rated	7.0%	63.5%	27.8%	1.6%	0.1%
Group Rated	6.7%	64.0%	27.8%	1.4%	0.1%
Group Rated	9.3%	60.4%	28.7%	1.6%	0.0%

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